(e) In case the address, telephone number, details of sponsor etc. are known, action is initiated to make enquiries directly. Otherwise, a request is made to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of the United Arab Emirates for their assistance. The same procedure is followed in case of women workers.

Meeting with Muslim Leaders hosted by American Embassy

1707. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the American Embassy recently hosted a meeting in Delhi with prominent Muslim Leaders;

(b) whether Government's formal permission was sought for the meeting;

(c) whether any Government's representative was invited in the meeting; and

(d) whether Government are in possession of its deliberations and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) Yes.

(b) Permission is not required for such meetings under the international conventions governing diplomatic practices.

(c) and (d) No.

Foreign diplomats' visit to J and K during Assembly Election

1708. SHRI K. KALAVENKATA RAO: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether diplomats based in New Delhi from various countries visited Jammu and Kashmir to witness the Assembly election in militancy torn States;

(b) if so, the number of diplomats with names of the countries who visited there;

(c) whether they have given any reports/impressions on polling/ elections in the State; and

(d) if so, the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) Yes. Delhi-based diplomats, as a part of their normal diplomatic functioning, visited Jammu and Kashmir during the Assembly Elections in the State. There was also no restriction on any other visitor; who was otherwise present in India, from going to J and K during this period.

(b) About 30 Delhi-based diplomats *inter alia* from Australia, Britain, Canada, Denmark, European Commission, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United States of America were issued special passes by the Election Commission of India, following precedent, to see the elections in Jammu and Kashmir.

(c) Any reports/impressions given by the diplomats would have been to their respective Governments, which is again a part of the normal diplomatic functioning.

(d) Jammu and Kashmir elections have been positively assessed in comments by members of the international community.

Foreign policy

1709. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the features of Government's foreign policy;

(b) how far this policy has helped in strengthening relations especially with Asian countries;

(c) whether Government propose to bring changes in its foreign policy; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) and (b) The basic tenets of the foreign policy are to safeguard and to promote country's core interests and to ensure the security of its people. With these objectives in view, the Government remains engaged with all the countries especially the countries which represent our immediate and proximate neighbourhood.

(c) and (d) Conduct of foreign policy is a dynamic and continuous exercise based on a realistic and pragmatic assessment of politico-strategic and socio-economic milieu around us. While basic principles and objectives of our foreign policy provide the element of continuity, our priorities and